

HEALTH ACTIVITIES

The degree of health facilities and services available in a city is directly related to the attractiveness of the city as a place in which to live. New Bern, the focal point for health activities in Craven County, has available both public and private health facilities offering various medical services.

The provision of public health facilities in New Bern is a function of the County; however, it is the City's responsibility to see that the physical facilities are provided and located in proper relation to one another. While the considerations mentioned here are considerations of land use planning and plan effectuation through zoning, the facility dealt with is a community facility.

Recently, there has been a trend among health and related facilities to gravitate toward a hospital, thereby forming a medical district. In New Bern, it is evident that forces are at work drawing medical and related facilities toward the new Craven County Hospital now under construction. This formation of a medical-district nucleus has occurred without official direction by the City through land use planning or zoning. In order to further encourage the development of this medical district, now is the time for New Bern to exert the necessary controls that will properly guide the development of this natural grouping into a Planned Medical District.

The initial step to be taken toward the development of a Planned Medical District would be the incorporation into the land use plan of a development policy relating to the medical district and the drawing of a master plan for the development of the area.

The second step would be the amendment of the Zoning Ordinance to create such a classification. This could be either an exclusive medical district or an institutional district. The latter is broader in scope and would allow a greater number of uses than just those associated with a Planned Medical District. Whichever approach is taken, however, care should be given to provide ample space for permitted uses and to exclude all incompatible uses.

While a Planned Medical District is afforded the best opportunity to develop if it is located on a major thoroughfare, the thoroughfare should not traverse the district. Since the developing medical district in New Bern is traversed by a major thoroughfare, Neuse Boulevard, consideration should be given to widening the road to provide extra lanes for turning movements. If this is not done, there will be a potential area of traffic congestion within the center of the district.

Some of the establishments that find it advantageous to locate in a Planned Medical District are as follows: offices of physicians and dentists; pharmacies; medical, dental, optical, pharmaceutical, and hospital suppliers; nursing and rest homes; medical laboratories; nurses' dormitories; businesses making and fitting prosthetics; restaurants catering to the medical district; florist shops; and public health offices. In addition to these, motels are considered to be good neighbors not only because they provide accommodations for visitors but also because their facilities can be used by outpatients.

It is probable that during this planning period, the Craven County Health Department will require more office space than is presently available in their Health Center. This building, although